



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer and
Executive Publisher, *Science*

June 20, 2008

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor of Louisiana
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Re: Veto of SB 733

Dear Governor Jindal:

Recently you told CBS's Face the Nation that "the way we're going to have smart, intelligent kids is exposing them to the very best science." At the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, we wholeheartedly agree. That is why we urge you to veto Senate Bill 733, the Louisiana Science Education Act, which appears designed to insert religious or unscientific views into science classrooms. The bill disingenuously implies that particular theories, including evolution, are controversial among scientists.

You called the scientific process exciting because scientists can "find facts and data and test what's come before you and challenge those theories." This is certainly true for the science of evolution. It involves multitudes of facts and data. Its principles have been tested and retested for decades. And yes, it has been subjected to scientific scrutiny—which has served to reinforce how fundamental evolution is. The science of evolution underpins all of modern biology and is supported by tens of thousands of scientific studies in fields that include cosmology, geology, paleontology, genetics and other biological specialties. It informs scientific research in a broad range of fields such as agriculture and medicine, work that has an important impact on our everyday lives.

In short, there is virtually no controversy about evolution among researchers, many of whom, like you, are deeply religious.

What about intelligent design, which you addressed in your recent interview? Because it is not science, but a concept based on a religious belief, intelligent design might be an appropriate topic for a course on philosophy or world religions. But it has no place in a science classroom. From a scientific perspective, there is simply no way to test for the presence or absence of God or another "designer." From a legal perspective, intelligent design comes from a single religious point of view, and a federal judge appropriately ruled that teaching it in science class is unconstitutional.

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In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a Louisiana “creation science” law. Rather than step backward, look to the future by seeking to provide Louisiana students with a firm understanding of evolution and other essential scientific concepts so they can compete for high-skill jobs in an increasingly high-tech world economy. Asserting that there are controversies about these concepts among scientists—when in fact there are not—will only confuse students, not enlighten them. I urge you to protect the future of science education in your state by rejecting this bill.

AAAS represents the interests of 10 million scientists worldwide and is the publisher of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*. Founded in 1848, AAAS has a longstanding interest and expertise in science education. We stand ready to assist you in any way that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



Alan I. Leshner